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## Sermon on the Gospel for the Second Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 14, 16—24.

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“Many are called, but few are chosen,” this truth Christ states in various places. In the parable of the sower He demonstrates that there are four classes of hearers, those at the wayside, on the rock, amidst the thorns, and on the good ground, and among these four classes, all of which hear the Word and are called, only the last class brings forth fruit and is saved. This is not God’s fault. The Calvinists teach, that God does not call all of them earnestly and seriously, that to some the Gospel is preached only for a sham, so to speak, that God does not want them to accept it at all, and therefore does not effectually offer them grace and salvation, nor works upon their heart, does not try at all to convert them. This is a hellish doctrine; it makes God a hypocrite and a liar. Nay, the truth is: the fault lies with man. Man rejects the call of the Gospel, despises the grace that is offered him, resists the working of the Holy Spirit, and thus makes it impossible for God to convert and to save him. “O Jerusalem,” etc., Matt. 23, 37. Men will not; that is the reason why the Gospel is preached in vain to so many people; that is why “many are called, but few are chosen,” why even among those who have the Gospel so many are lost.

This solemn truth is also demonstrated in the parable of the Great Supper which is contained in to-day’s Gospel-lesson. Among those who were called to this supper, the greatest number had all kinds of excuses to offer for not accepting the invitation, and the consequence was that they were not admitted, and that others were called in their place. Having indicated the general truths it conveys, I wish now to specialize and to apply its teachings directly to you, by telling you

THAT THE CALL: “COME, FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY!”

1. *Has been extended to you;*
2. *That you cannot afford to disregard this call.*

## 1.

In our parable we are told of a supper. "A certain man made a great supper and bade many." Who is that "certain man," and what is the Great Supper he prepared? If we look at the preceding verse, we shall find an answer to these questions. There we are told that the parable was elicited from Christ by the words of one with whom He was sitting at meat, and who had exclaimed: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" As an answer to these words Christ related the parable of the Great Supper. Evidently, then, it is intended as a description of the kingdom of God. Generally, Christ begins His parables with the words: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto," etc. Here He did not need to repeat these words, because the other person had just alluded to the kingdom of God. Now from this it will be easy for us to infer what is meant by the supper, and who is the man that prepared it. None else than God can be that man. He has prepared a great supper for the whole human race. He offered up His only Son for our sake, delivered Him into death for us, and now calls sinners to feast upon the flesh and blood of His Son, to partake of His merits by faith, and to enjoy the redemption and eternal salvation which He has wrought out for them. For thus the Son Himself says: John 6, 33. 35. 47. God, then, is He that prepares that supper, and the supper consists of Christ and all His merits, forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and eternal salvation.

To this supper "He bade many," Christ proceeds. For this purpose He "sent His servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready!" Notice here the wording of the call: "Come, for all things are now ready!" Everything is ready: we need but come and enjoy it. Divine grace is merited, our sins are expiated, heaven is ours. We need do nothing towards completing our salvation; we cannot and must not help to finish the supper and to set the table: nay, we merely need to come and sit down, to eat and enjoy the precious things God's love and mercy has prepared for us. Again we notice the person who issues the call, and the manner in which it is done. It is God that bids us to His supper. Who else could do it? Who else would have the right to invite anybody to His supper? But God "sends out His servant at supper time to say to them that are bidden, Come, for all things are now ready!" It is not hard to guess who the servant is that goes forth to bring the divine invitation to the guests: it is the minister of the Gospel. He it is who is delegated by God to bring to sinful mankind the joyful news: "Come, for all things are now ready!" Come to the Great Supper which divine love and mercy has prepared for you! Come, ye sinners, eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lamb that was slain for you! Come and by faith become par-

takers of the redemption God's own Son has wrought for you! This is the supper, this the call and invitation to the supper.

And this call is extended to *you*, that is what I want to drive home to-day. Before the supper had been prepared, and before the evening of the world and, together with it, the time for the supper had come, there were people that had been bidden to the supper. The text says so. The servant was sent out "to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready!" The people who had been bidden to the supper before it was prepared, were the people of the Jews. To them God had revealed during the time of the Old Testament, hundreds and thousands of years before Christ came, that He would send them a Messiah, who should save them from sin and death, and He had ordained among them the festival of the passover, the eating of the paschal lamb, as a type of the Great Supper which, by the coming of the Messiah, should be prepared for them. These people therefore lived in constant expectation, waiting anxiously for the arrival of the time when the table should be set and the viands spread for them.

But when the time came that the supper was ready and they were called: "Come, for all things are now ready!" they despised the call. The people had degenerated, their teachers had become false prophets, they were not awaiting a Messiah from sin and death, but one that should lead them to earthly glory and power. So when Jesus appeared, they rejected Him and His preaching. And what did God do? "Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the lanes and streets of the city . . . that my house may be filled." That is, when the Jews rejected God's call, He rejected them also; He would no longer retain them as His people, but destroyed them and scattered them over the face of the whole earth, making them a derision and a byword among the nations.

Instead of the Jews He now selected others, to whom He sent the Gospel and called them for His supper. He sent His servant out into the lanes and streets of the city and then into the highways and hedges, and bade him bring in the maimed and halt and blind, *i. e.*, He now sent His Gospel to the heathen. (Acts 13, 46, Paul and Barnabas to the Jews at Antioch.) To the Gentiles the apostles went first, preaching to them that were close at hand, then extending their activity farther and farther, until, finally, Paul could write to the Romans (ch. 10, 18): "Their sound," etc. As far as the world had been explored and known by that time, the sound of the Gospel had gone out, the servants of the Lord had gone to all the heathen with the joyful invitation to the Great Supper: "Come, for all things are now ready!"

And this call has come to you, my friends. Down the long ages of centuries the Gospel has been preached. At times it was darkened

by man's ordinances, but God has again and again made it to go forth; He has sent His servants anon and anon to invite sinners to His Great Supper. And you have also been called; the invitation has also reached you. Millions and millions of heathen there are still who have never heard the joyful tidings of the Gospel, who have never been reached by the call of the Great Supper. But you, whose forefathers were heathen, too, living in idolatry and without the knowledge of the true God, of the Savior and the Gospel, you He has favored so highly as to call you to His heavenly feast. Do not imagine that you are better than others, that you were naturally predisposed to accept the Gospel, while the others were not, and that for this reason God has extended the call to you, while He has passed others by, because He knew that you would accept it while they would not. No, nothing of the kind! You were by nature just as wicked and perverse as they; you did not in the least deserve to be called; you were worthy of eternal damnation as well as they. It was God's mercy that called you. Not your merits, but His mercy prompted Him to send the call to you: "Come, for all things are now ready!" Ah, learn to thank Him for it; learn to appreciate His goodness; learn to humble yourselves before Him and to confess with Jacob: "Lord, I am not worthy," etc., Gen. 32, 10. And above all, heed the call of God! Do not refuse the invitation! Do not trouble yourselves about those who are not called. Do not ask, Why did God call me, and why does He leave others uncalled? How can He condemn the heathen that have never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel? Leave that to Him! Do not try to peer into His mysteries! It will blind the eyes of your reason, just as you cannot bear looking into the sun. Let your sole concern be your own eternal welfare. See that you heed the call and follow it. Be intent upon saving your own soul. And this is the second point to which I desire to direct your attention, to-wit, that you cannot afford to disregard the call which has been extended to you.

## 2.

I wish to impress this upon your mind, because there is great danger of doing this. Our old depraved flesh has an aversion to follow the call of God, to listen to and heed the Gospel. It clings so much to this life and its gifts that it is apt to forget heavenly things on that account. In fact, it is just these things that are given in the text as the excuses which are pleaded for not accepting the call to the supper. "And they all with one consent," etc., vv. 18—20. All these plead as an excuse that they could not come because their occupation and business and the duties of their family detained them. And these are very generally the excuses that are rendered. Men first want to tend to their temporal affairs; they want to earn some money and acquire some possessions, want to be-

come rich, want to enjoy this world with its riches and honors and pleasures, before they give any attention to the welfare of their soul. For this, they imagine, they have plenty of time. After they will have grown old, when death approaches, then, they, too, will hear the Gospel and concern themselves about the future life. Or if they do not so much go in pursuit of riches and honors, yet they imagine that the duties they owe to their wife and family are paramount, that they have enough to do to take care of them and support them without running to church and spending money for its support. How truly does the Savior picture human nature in this description!

But, friends, these excuses are all null and void. You may tend to all these things, and yet accept the call to the supper. You may go and see the ground you have bought, you may prove your oxen, you may marry a wife, and yet you can attend the Great Supper. You may work in your earthly calling, you may till your farm, may sell your merchandise, may ply your tools, you may fulfill conscientiously the duties you owe to your wife and children and provide for them bread and clothing by the work of your hands, and yet you can, at the same time, hear the Gospel and fulfill the duties you owe to your God. There is nothing conflicting between the two things. It was God who said unto Adam: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread," and it is God who sends out His servants with the call for the Great Supper: "Come, for all things are now ready!" Therefore do both these things: tend to your earthly calling, but do not, on that account, neglect the care for your soul. It is the devil, it is your flesh and blood that would fain make you believe that the two are incompatible. It is your sinful heart that clings so tightly to this life that it imagines you have no time to care about the next. But do not heed its vain excuses. Let your first care be for your soul, and then see to it that you do not neglect the body. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things" (which you need for your body) "shall be added unto you." First heed the call to the supper, then go and look at your ground and oxen and marry your wife. Do not turn the thing around, as the men in the text did.

For terrible will be the consequences if you do! What was it the landlord did when his servant told him of the excuses that had been made by the men whom he had called for his supper? In the first place, he became angry. If you disregard the call to the supper, you will incur the wrath and displeasure of God. And that is a terrible thing! For the consequence of that will be, that the Lord will take the Gospel away from you. Remember the people of the Jews! They would not heed His call, but rejected and crucified His Son, and lo! He sent the Romans to destroy their city, and in its siege thousands upon thousands of them perished, while those who survived were dragged away as slaves and sold into all parts of the

world. They were no longer God's chosen people, but they were rejected by Him, and the Gospel was given to the Gentiles. See in them your own picture if you will, like them, make all kinds of excuses for not accepting the call to the supper. Ah! many a nation has, by thus neglecting and despising the Gospel, driven it away and lapsed back into the night of heathendom and idolatry. For examples behold Asia, Africa, Italy, etc. And, friends, our nation need not be secure. If it continues to show itself ungrateful, God will take the Gospel away from us, too. The indications already point that way. Laxity in doctrine and practice, love-making with false beliefs (Parliament of Religions), the false worship of the lodges: what else are they but indications that the Gospel is preparing to leave us and to make room for the false gospel of the devil? Truly, if our nation continues to disregard the call, the Gospel will sooner or later be taken from us and given to others.

And mark, in the last place: If you do not heed the call for the supper, you will never partake of it. "For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." The supper is prepared for all, redemption and salvation has been wrought out for all sinners without distinction and exception. But, of course, if you will not heed the call, if you decline the invitation, you willfully deprive yourself of its enjoyment, you bring the wrath of God down upon your head—for could He tolerate it that you should thus despise His mercy and goodness? Nay, He will then shut you out from heaven, cast you out from before His face, and give you your share with the wicked and the devils, according to your own selection. Because you would have no grace and mercy, you shall have wrath, and eternal damnation shall be your lot and punishment.

G. L.

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## Sermon on the Gospel for the Third Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 15, 1—10.

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In a recent sermon I described to you the doom of the damned in hell from the picture which Christ draws in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. We saw how they will suffer unspeakable torments in the flames of the fiery lake, how they will be tortured by the pangs of an evil conscience, and that there will be neither respite nor deliverance for them, but that "their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched."

This terrible doom, we also heard, will come upon them for their wicked life in this world. The wages of sin is death, says the Scripture, *i. e.*, both temporal and eternal death are the wages, the necessary consequence, of sin, the punishment which God's

justice must exact for sin. Eternal damnation therefore is the doom we all have deserved by our sins. For: Rom. 3, 23; Eccl. 7, 20.

Nor can we do anything to rescue ourselves from this fearful fate. We are unable to pay for our sins and satisfy divine justice or appease divine wrath. All the good works we can perform are not able to pay for a single one of our sins, for "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," and therefore unable to merit divine favor. And though we were to spend all our life in bewailing our sins, though we were to shed oceans of tears of penitence and sorrow, all this would not do us a particle of good. We could not thereby diminish our guilt; our doom would still be fixed. In spite of all that we could do to expiate our sins, we could not escape their consequences; we would, nevertheless, have to suffer death on their account, and must remain victims of hell.

Is there no help for us from the endless torture and misery of hell? Must we despair on account of our sin? What a dreadful condition that would be to know that we must run helplessly and hopelessly into our eternal ruin! Life would not be worth living, if this were the case; it would be better, a thousand times better, for us never to have been born! But glory be to God: there is hope for us! We are not to be lost on account of our sins, we are to escape their punishment and be eternally saved. For although we are all sinners, guilty of eternal condemnation and unable to save ourselves, yet we are taught in the Scriptures that our sins have been taken away by another. "Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners," and receives them. This glorious and consolatory truth that

#### JESUS RECEIVETH SINNERS

is put before us in our Gospel-lesson of to-day. Let us therefore now consider this precious truth. Let me show you

1. *Which sinners Jesus receives;*
2. *Why He receives them.*

#### 1.

"Then drew near," vv. 1. 2. Here first the fact is stated that Jesus received sinners. He ate with publicans and other notorious sinners, kept company with them, and received them as His own. This gave the Pharisees and scribes occasion to taunt and jeer at Him: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them!" They mean to say: There you can see what kind of a man He is! With these notorious sinners, these outcasts of society, He keeps company! Surely, He is no better than they are, otherwise He would keep aloof from them. But, oh! what these self-righteous hypocrites ridiculed is a glorious truth, full of consolation, and inspiring hope for the hearts of despondent and despairing sinners.

Jesus receiveth sinners! That is the purpose for which He came into the world, to save sinners from eternal destruction and receive them into everlasting life. That is why He left His throne of divine glory and came into this poor world of ours. That is why He assumed our human nature, so that He might bear our sins and suffer their punishment in our place by suffering and death, that we might thus escape their punishment in the flames of hell. Before He was born, it was announced by the angel that "His name should be called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins." His very name, "Jesus," indicates this, for Jesus means Savior. That this was the purpose of His coming He also Himself stated on various occasions: Luke 19, 10; John 3, 17. To save sinners, to redeem them from their sin and its consequences, that was the sole purpose and object of His life. And to accomplish this purpose, He ate with publicans and sinners, and received them as His own.

But which sinners does He receive? It would do us little good to know that He came to save some sinners, but not whether *we* are among the number. But oh! friends, we know that we, too, are included among the sinners that Jesus receives. For He came to save all sinners. "God so loved the world," etc. "Behold the Lamb of God," etc. Do you belong to the world? Don't you live in the world? Well, if you do,—and you certainly do,—then He has borne your sins also, and He also receives you! "The Son of Man came to seek that which was lost." Are you lost? Do you see and acknowledge your forlorn condition? In other words, Are you a sinner, guilty of divine wrath and everlasting punishment? If so, then Jesus has come to save you. "For this is a faithful saying," etc., 1 Tim. 1, 15. Mark you: He has come to save, not a few sinners, not only this one and that, but "sinners," all sinners without exception. Therefore, if you are a sinner, oh! then rejoice, knowing that Jesus has come to save you, and will therefore receive you, too.

But you say, I am too great a sinner! I have been too wicked, have lived in vice and sin too long; my sins are greater than that they could be forgiven; such a wretch as me the Savior does not, cannot want! Ah, do not let that drive you to despair. For though you were the vilest sinner that ever trod the face of this earth, if your sins were as high as heaven and as deep as hell, though they were crying to God for vengeance like the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, those wicked cities of the plain, yet the Savior will receive you. He did not come to save merely those people who are virtuous and live an honorable life in the sight of man; nay, He stoops to the very lowest and wishes to lift them out of the mire and filth of sin and vice and crime. For who were they with whom He associated according to our text? They were publicans and notorious sinners. They were such as lived dishonestly, defrauding their neighbors and

given to various other vices and sins; they were despised by all on account of their wickedness. With them Jesus ate and drank, them He received as His own. Surely, you are no worse than they were. Or do you claim that you are? Then look at the Savior again at another occasion. See Him at the house of Simon the Leper. There a woman comes in and washes His feet with her tears and wipes them with the hairs of her head. That woman was an adulteress and had led a very loose life. Surely, Jesus will repel her! But no, He allows her to finish, and then bids her be of good cheer, for, says He, "thy sins are forgiven thee." Again, look at Him while on the cross: who is it that hangs at His right side? It is a felon, who has spent all his life in robbery, theft, murder, and like crimes. This criminal turns to Him and says: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." Does Christ tell him: You are too vile, too great a sinner, you cannot be saved, there is no hope for you? Ah no, He tells him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Now is there a soul here that could say that he is a greater sinner than that robber was? Assuredly not! Oh, come then, give up your doubts and fears, come to Jesus, and He will receive you. Though you should be an adulterer, a drunkard, a dishonest person, yea, a robber and a thief, though you had spent all your life in the service of sin-and vice, yet you need not despair. Do come to Jesus, cast yourself at His feet, lay your sins upon Him, and rest assured that He will not reject you. "For him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," He says.

No matter, therefore, who you are, what you have done, how great and terrible and numerous your sins may be: Jesus is willing to receive you. Only come to Him! Do not, like the Pharisees and scribes in the text, despise Jesus because He receives sinners. Do not think yourselves better than others; do not be self-righteous. Do not imagine for a moment that you can by your own righteousness enter heaven, that you need no Savior from your sins. That is the other extreme into which people are liable to fall. Either they think they are too great sinners, or else they imagine that their sins are too small to need a Savior. Learn to acknowledge your sins, learn to confess with Paul that you are chief among sinners. Look into the mirror of the divine Law and learn to see yourself in all your wretchedness and misery of sin; learn to understand what it is to be a sinner; learn that every sin, even the slightest one, makes you a child of hell and debars you from heaven. Ah, if once you have come to see sin and to see yourself in that light, then, surely, your self-righteousness will leave you. How can you hope to appear before God as you are, knowing that you are polluted by sin, and that your sins must exclude you from heaven? Nay, give up the vain hope of saving yourself! Be content to let Jesus save you. Lay your sins at His feet; accept what He has

done for you. He came to save sinners, and only those who acknowledge their sinfulness will He receive. "The Son of Man came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

And mark finally: You must be willing and resolved to give up sin in the future, to quit the service of sin. These publicans and sinners had been given to all kinds of sin and vices, but no doubt they had renounced them now. Do you think that otherwise Jesus would have kept company with them? Most assuredly not! He was the friend of sinners, but not the friend of sin. He told the man who had been born blind and had been cured by Him: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." He was always ready to forgive past sins, no matter how great they were, but He would not allow those who had become His disciples to go on in the service of sin. These men, no doubt, were penitent sinners, who had renounced their former sins and had begun a life of holiness. Those who were publicans among them no doubt were ready, like Zaccheus, to "give the half of their goods to the poor, and if they had taken anything from a man by false accusation, to restore it fourfold." Do not, therefore, construe a false comfort out of the truth that Jesus receives sinners. Do not think now: Well, if Jesus is so merciful, if He receives all sinners, even the vilest and greatest, why, then it does not matter if I indulge my appetites and yield to this and that temptation by which I am beset. Do not think you can keep on drinking, or cheating, or living in other sins! Nay, you must quit the service of sin, no matter what sin it is. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity!"

## 2.

Now let us also hear the reason why Jesus receives sinners.

There was certainly nothing in these publicans and sinners that attracted Jesus. They were outcasts of society, despised and rejected and avoided by all. He did not see anything in them that prompted Him to make them His associates. And the Pharisees and scribes could not see why He should eat with them and receive them, and therefore sneered at Him: "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them!"—And thus it is with respect to all other sinners: there is nothing in man to attract Christ, nothing that makes us worthy to be received by Him. Nay, we are filthy and polluted by sin, and our corruption and depravity could only tend to drive Him away from us, and cause Him to leave us to our fate. For He is just and holy; He is infinitely pure and immaculate; in fact, so holy that it is impossible for Him to hold communion with that which is impure. Nor is He in any way bound to come and make us His associates, and drag us forth from our natural state of misery, and translate us into His glorious kingdom. God

owes us nothing. His Son was not obliged to come and be our Savior from sin, and thus make it possible again for us to escape hell and enter heaven. He had at the beginning created man so that he could enter heaven. Man, however, had fallen and excluded himself from heaven, and willfully plunged himself into temporal and eternal misery, and had thus forfeited all claims to heaven. God was not beholden to man in any shape or form. He might have cast us all into hell on account of our sin, and we could not have accused Him of injustice. We would have received what we deserved. Nor did He need us to complete His bliss and happiness. Nay, He is infinitely happy and blissful in Himself. He needs nothing and nobody else to make His happiness perfect. Even though He would have let us all run into our eternal destruction, He would not have been a whit less happy on that account. Nay, nothing of all these things could have prompted Him to save the sinful world and to receive sinners as His own.

Jesus shows the Pharisees who taunted Him for receiving sinners what prompted Him to do it, and justifies His action. He tells them two parables, in which He demonstrates, 1) that it is His love to, and mercy for, sinners, and 2) because He has bought them for His own with a price, that He seeks them so diligently and receives them into His kingdom. "And He spake this parable unto them, saying: What man of you," etc., vv. 3—7. A sheep, when it has gone astray from the flock, is a very helpless and unhappy creature. It goes about bleating and endeavoring to find its way back to the flock, but, instead, it generally strays only farther away and finally becomes a prey to wolves. Therefore the shepherd takes pity on such a poor lost sheep, and he leaves the ninety and nine, which are comparatively safe, and goes to hunt the lost one, and if he finds it, he takes the exhausted creature and carries it back to the flock on his shoulders, rejoicing that the lost one is found again. And the love and pity of such a shepherd is a picture of the infinite love and pity with which the heart of Christ yearns for the poor lost sinners that are strayed from His flock. He does not look at their guilt and shame, does not consider that their misery is self-incurred and well deserved; nay, He only looks at their lost and forlorn state; He only considers that if He will not rescue them, nothing and nobody can do it, that, unless He goes forth to carry them back to the flock on His shoulders, they must be inevitably lost. And His heart goes forth to them in tender love and mercy. Ah, it grieves Him to see sinners die and perish forever. He does not wish to see the misery and perdition of His creatures; He takes no pleasure in their ruin; nay, His desire is that they all might be happy here and blissful hereafter. Thus it is, in the first place, His love and mercy that prompt Him to seek and to save that which is lost.

But there is still another reason for this. His love to sinners and His mercy for them prompted Him to provide means for the salvation of lost souls, and now that these means are provided, He does not want all His exertions in behalf of their rescue to have been in vain. "Either what woman," etc., vv. 8—10. It is not a matter of indifference to that woman to have lost the piece of money. She had to work for it, and it is worth something to her; she knows that she can buy something for the money, and therefore she values it and takes all possible pains to find the money again, and when she has found it, she rejoices. Thus the souls of lost and stray sinners are dear to Jesus; He does not want them to be lost, because He has wrought out salvation for them. He has suffered and died for them, died the most ignominious and painful death that could be imagined for their sakes; He shed His holy, innocent blood for them, and thus bought them from sin, death, and the devil to be His own. Could He, therefore, look on indifferently when He finds those for whom He paid such a precious ransom straying away again from Him and about to fall once more into the hand of His and their own enemy? Nay, He does not want to lose them; He does not wish that His blood should have been shed in vain for a single soul; His desire, moreover, is that all sinners should come to a knowledge of their salvation and be brought to accept it with true faith. Every soul that is actually saved by Him will form another gem in the bright crown of glory that will adorn His head in the blissful ages of eternity.

O sinners, lost and straying in the labyrinth of vice and misery, behold, the Savior seeks you! He has shed His precious blood for you; He has bought you with a price; ye are His own; His heart yearns for you in tender love and pity, and oh! how He would delight to find you and bring you to His fold! Will you not hear His voice as He calls for you? Come to Him! He will not reject you; nay, He will clasp you in His arms and return to the flock with you rejoicing, and "there shall be joy to-day in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Amen. G. L.

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## Address

at the Installation of the Rev. John Schlerf as Chaplain and Superintendent of the Ev. Luth. Sanitarium at Edgewater, Colo.,  
April 17, 1910.

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Text: MATT. 9, 2.

"Jubilate" is the name of this day, after the introit which was chanted in the early Christian Church from the 66th Psalm: "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands!" Yea, rejoice and sing praises unto the God of our salvation! And a day of rejoicing this day has

always been in our beloved Synod. Sixty-three years ago to-day was the birthday of the Missouri Synod, which by the grace of God, from a small mustard seed, has grown to be a tree that extends its branches into almost every State of the Union, yea, far across the ocean into distant lands with strange tongues.

And to us it is more than a happy coincidence that this day, Jubilate, the day of rejoicing in our Synod, is the one upon which the newly-called chaplain and superintendent of this institution is formally introduced to his new field of labor. For me personally this day brings a cause of great rejoicing, since my hopes and my ideals, which I have entertained for the past five years, ever since the founding of the institution, are in part fulfilled to-day. So far as men can see, the Sanitarium Society, through its Board, has now laid the foundation for solid and permanent growth. The time of infancy in the institution, during which the project was unflinchingly guarded and upheld by the Spiritual Adviser and the Board of Directors, has now gone by, and we may hope that, by the help of God, the permanence and stability of the institution is now assured.

It is a day of rejoicing for the Sanitarium Association and their faithful Board, since God caused the newly-called superintendent to regard and accept their call as a call of God, and he is entering upon his work with the full consciousness that he is serving the Lord in this work.

And, finally, it is a day of rejoicing for all of us and for all those who love the true Lutheran Zion, not only because the Sanitarium is the only benevolent institution of true Lutheranism in the Rocky Mountain States, but because this day will undoubtedly usher in a new era in the history of true Lutheranism in Colorado.

But most of all does the coming of this new superintendent mean to the patients of this institution who shall see and find in him not only, as he is principally, a spiritual father, but also a true and devoted friend and a cheerful and faithful companion.

These three phases are united in the work of a Christian pastor of this institution. Let me, under the gracious guidance of the Lord, show you the reason for this from our text. Let me present to you: *The great blessing of the forgiveness of sins, as shown in the work of the pastor of this institution.*

"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee!" Christ says in our text. Upon what occasion did He speak these words? He had come back across the Sea of Tiberias into His own city, Capernaum, when a man sick with the palsy was brought to Him. The poor man was so badly sick that he could not walk and could not be carried any other way but on a stretcher, or bed. And thus the four men that were carrying him managed to let the bed down from above,

through the tiles of the roof, at the feet of Jesus. Now what did the people expect after seeing so many miracles, so many healings, at the hands of Jesus, but that He would stretch forth His hand and make the poor invalid whole! And that this was also the expectation and prayer of the four friends and of the sick man himself, we see from the whole story.

But for a while, at least, the people and the friends were disappointed. The first act, the first word of Christ was unexpected by all, with the exception, perhaps, of the sick man himself. "Son, be of good cheer," He says; "thy sins be forgiven thee!" That was the principal, the most important part of His dealing of the sick man. That was the treatment upon which more depended than on anything else. If the man was sure of the forgiveness of his sins, if he knew that his sickness was no longer a punishment of God, then he had no cause for sorrow and melancholy any more, but could be cheerful and happy in the knowledge of God's mercy which had become his own by faith in His grace.

This same great blessing of the forgiveness of sins will be revealed in the work of the pastor of this institution. Having come to this city with the dread disease myself, I know the feeling of misery and dejection of being forsaken and punished, which will always strive for the mastery in the heart of the sick. And if, in addition, some of those who enter this institution are tortured by an evil conscience, because they have, perhaps, themselves helped to make themselves addicted to the dread disease, or if some other trouble lies heavily upon their hearts, and their sickness makes them melancholy and morbid, then they are very often inclined to despair. But now God has given the power of the forgiveness of sins to man, and the pastor of this institution shall use this power in his pastoral dealings with the inmates. When, then, in the course of his work, such a heart is opened to him, and he sees: Here is a humble and contrite spirit in need of just that grace and mercy which the Savior has gained for all men,—with what joy will the pastor tell that sick person: "Thy sins be forgiven thee!" Since Christ the Lord has borne all your sins with all their punishment, your sickness is no longer a punishment of God. Only receive and embrace Jesus as the *one*, as *your* Savior, then afflictions and sicknesses are no longer tokens of God's wrath, but they are tokens of His grace, as the Lord says: "All things work together for good to them that love God. . . . Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." How can a person help but be cheered by such comforting words? How can he help but be drawn to that blessed Savior for whom no cost was too great and no suffering too severe, since the salvation of lost and condemned sinners from sin, sickness, and death was at stake? If the Lord then also blesses the work of the

doctor and the nurses in this splendid climate, how willingly will such a patient, whose soul has been made whole together with the body, serve Him in His kingdom and help to build up His Zion in the West!

But there is another possibility. When Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy: "Son, be of good cheer!" this man thereby had no guarantee that he would become well in body. But that to him was now of minor importance. The great load which had been oppressing him had been taken away, and he could look into the future with a light heart. He trusted in his Savior, and left everything to this loving Lord whose mercy he had received. Whether, then, he were to get well, or whether he should continue to endure his sickness, or whether he should soon close his eyes in death: nothing mattered now any more, since he had been assured of, and received, the forgiveness of his sins.

Thus it is also in the work of the pastor of this institution. In spite of the warnings and pleadings which are sent out over the country that people should not wait too long in sending patients afflicted with this disease to a dry climate, it will always happen for various reasons that people come too late, or complications will set in, and all hope must be abandoned. Oh, how blessed is the work of the pastor then, when he is called upon to comfort the dying and to prepare them for the last journey through the valley of the shadow of death! What consolation will then be carried in his words: "Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee!" Death has lost its terrors for all those who are in Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ, the risen Hero, the Victor, has conquered death and has brought life and immortality to light. In faith in Him you may say: "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through Christ Jesus, our Lord!" Who dieth thus, in this faith, dies well.

Do you see now wherein this institution differs from others? There may be other institutions, with a similar object, larger and more pretentious; there may be other institutions more richly endowed: but this is the only institution of its kind in the Rocky Mountain States where the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus is proclaimed publicly and privately in all its purity. And therefore our prayer to-day is this: May God preserve the institution on its present basis, and let it flourish to the glory of His holy name and for the welfare of many souls! Amen.

PAUL KRETMANN.

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## Sermon Outline on Acts 4, 12.

Nearly all the names in the Bible have been carefully chosen: Moses; Samuel; Abram to Abraham. Our text speaks of the most precious of names. The Old Testament form was Joshua. Jesus the real, spiritual Joshua, the Deliverer of His people and Portioner-out of the kingdom of heaven, as our text states. Let us regard

1. *The teaching of the text;*
2. *The truth of it;*
3. *Some consequences which flow from it.*

### 1.

Admits of no misunderstanding or equivocation; no one commissioned to give peace with God, pardon of sins, deliverance from the wrath to come but Jesus. Only one place of refuge and safety in the days of the Flood — Noah's ark; only one hiding-place from the floodgates of the divine anger — the name of Jesus. Only one person to whom Egyptians could go in the years of famine — Joseph; Jesus the Bread of Life, the Manna of Heaven. Only one word — "Shibboleth" — availed in the conflict of the Ephraimites with the Gileadites at the fords of the Jordan; Jesus' name alone avails at the portals of heaven, John 14, 6; 1 Cor. 3, 11.

### 2.

Is true because text taken from God's Volume of Truth says so. Additional arguments, because a) man is what he is; and what is man? A sinner, no exception — everywhere. The best of men entertained the deepest sense of sin — Luther. Man therefore needs a Savior. b) Because God is what He is; and what is God? A deep question, not in our power of comprehension. But every one feels there is an immeasurable distance between God and man. To bridge that gulf man needs a Mediator, Atoner, Advocate. c) Because the Bible is what it is. From Genesis to Revelation one golden thought and theme — first dimly revealed: allegories of Old Testament services and sacrifices: — scape-goat, cities of refuge, *et al.*, all pointing to the salvation in Jesus.

### 3.

a) What about that portion of mankind that knows not and believes not in Jesus? A question we should not be ashamed of leaving alone, turning them over to God's righteous dealing and mercy. We adhere to our text. — b) Over against the liberalistic, latitudinarian opinion of our day, which places Jesus and Mohammed, the Bible and the Koran, the writings of Luther and the "revelations" of Swedenborg on the same plane. — c) Against the idolatry of Rome: Mary; saints; masses. — d) Against lodge rituals or any form of worship eliminating Christ. — e) Against the common heresy that it matters little what a person believes, just so he is *sincere*. Priests of Baal, Israelites offering children to Moloch, Saul, the Pharisee, types of "sincerity." "Sincerity" is not Christ; it cannot put away sin. "Could my zeal no respite know," etc. L. B.